

wherein said agent parameter is sent using E-mail to a remote computer storing a second agent software which is substantially the same as said first agent software so that said second software can be executed using said agent parameter to control the behavior of the agent.

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125. (New) A computer readable medium for controlling a virtual agent wherein said medium provides a virtual agent having a plurality of agent parameters, said agent parameters configured to determine the behavior of said virtual agent;

wherein said agent parameters are sent to a recipient through a network using E-mail;

24 wherein a state of said virtual agent is set to an absent state corresponding to sending said agent parameters to said recipient; and

wherein said virtual agent is selectively displayed on the display unit according to said state, wherein said virtual agent is displayed on a display unit when said state represents other than said absent state.

REMARKS

As a preliminary matter, Applicants filed Information Disclosure Statements on September 27, 1999 and February 15, 2000. Acknowledgement thereof is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-24 and 33-66 are pending. Claims 33-48 and 50 are canceled without prejudice, claims 1-3, 49 and 51 are amended and new claims 67-125 are added.

Claims 1-24 and 33-66 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over Davies et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,931,907 ("*Davies*") in view of Brunson, U.S. Patent No. 5,647,002 ("*Brunson*"). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection and submit that the claims are allowable for all the reasons provided below.

There is no suggestion to combine the references as suggested by the Examiner. As understood, *Davies* discloses a method of providing a virtual agent. However, the Examiner correctly states that *Davies* does not "explicitly detail the behavior of said virtual agent is continuously modified with each detected event." Office Action, p. 2, ¶12. The Examiner maintains that *Brunson* taught "an email

system including Synchronization ..." Office Action, p. 2, ¶2. However, as understood, rather than teaching an E-mail system including synchronization, *Brunson* teaches automatic synchronization of the contents of "a pair of mailboxes, each one resides in a different electronic messaging system, are automatically synchronized ... [I]llustratively, one message system may be in an e-mail system and the other messaging system may be a voice mail system." *Brunson*, col 2, lines 53-58. One of ordinary skill would not find motivation within the four corners of either of these references for the combination suggested by the Examiner.

Even if it is assumed, *arguendo*, that the individual teachings of *Davies* and *Brunson* are indeed combinable, such combination does not render the claimed invention obvious. At most, the suggested combination would not teach an E-mail including synchronization, but would teach synchronizing an E-mail with a mailbox in a different messaging system.

Furthermore, the cited references do not disclose or otherwise suggest all the features of the claimed invention set forth in claim 1. Specifically, claim 1 as amended recites the agent parameters controlling the behavior of an agent delivering an E-mail are appended to the main mail text having an appended mail header, the agent parameters are responsive to a send command designating the transmission of the E-mail for transmission to a recipient in combination with an E-mail of a pre-set illustrative sentence sent by the agent to a user of the agent, among other features. In view of the failure of the cited references to teach or suggest all of the features of claim 1 as amended, claim 1 is believed allowable over the cited references.

Claims 2 and 3, which depend from claim 1, recite additional features and are allowable for the reason discussed above with respect to claim 1.

Davies, alone or in combination with *Brunson*, does not disclose or otherwise suggest all the features of the claimed invention set forth in claim 4. Specifically, claim 4 recites the agent parameters controlling the behavior of an agent delivering an E-mail are appended to the main mail text having an appended mail header, responsive to a send command designating the transmission of the E-mail, for transmission to a recipient in combination with an E-mail of a pre-set illustrative sentence transmitted by the agent to a recipient, among other features. In view of the failure of the cited references to teach or suggest all the features of claim 4, claim 4 is believed allowable over the cited references.

Claim 5 depends from claim 4 and is allowable for the reason discussed above with respect to claim 4.

Davies, alone or in combination with *Brunson*, does not disclose or otherwise suggest all the features of the claimed invention set forth in claim 6. Specifically, claim 6 recites the agent parameters controlling the behavior of an agent delivering an E-mail are appended to the main mail text having an appended mail header, responsive to a send command designating the transmission of the E-mail, for transmission to a recipient in combination with an E-mail of a pre-set illustrative sentence sent by the agent to the user or to the recipient, among other features. In view of the failure of the cited references to teach or suggest all the features of claim 6, claim 6 is believed allowable.

Claims 7 and 8, which depend directly or indirectly from claim 6, recite additional features and are allowable for all the reasons discussed above with respect to claim 6.

Davies, alone or in combination with *Brunson*, does not disclose or otherwise suggest all the features of the claimed invention set forth in claim 9. Specifically, claim 9 recites mail transmission means controlled by the agent manager upon acceptance by the send command accepting means of a send command which designates transmission of an E-mail for appending the agent parameters to the main mail text having an appended mail header for transmitting an E-mail to a recipient in combination with the agent manager which modifies the agent parameters responsive to the contents of experiences reflecting the operating hysteresis for the agent to voluntarily send to the user an E-mail of an illustrative sentence pre-set by the agent, among other features. In view of the failure of the cited references to teach or suggest all the features of claim 9, claim 9 is believed allowable.

Claims 10 and 11, which depend from claim 9, directly or indirectly, recite additional features and are allowable for all the reasons discussed above.

Davies, alone or in combination with *Brunson*, does not disclose or otherwise suggest all the features of the claimed invention set forth in claim 12. Specifically, claim 12 recites the mail transmission means controlled by the agent manager upon acceptance by the send command accepting means of a send command which designates the transmission of an E-mail for appending the agent parameters to the main mail text having an appended mail header, for sending an E-mail to a recipient

in combination with the agent manager which modifies the agent parameters responsive to the contents of experiences reflecting the operating hysteresis for the agent to voluntarily send to the recipient an E-mail of an illustrative sentence pre-set by the agent, among other features. In view of the failure of the cited references to teach or suggest all the features of claim 12, claim 12 is believed allowable over the cited references.

Claim 13 depends from claim 12 and recites additional features. Claim 13 is believed allowable for the reasons discussed above with respect to claim 12.

Davies, alone or in combination with *Brunson*, does not disclose or otherwise suggest all the features of the claimed invention set forth in claim 14. Specifically, claim 14 recites the mail transmission means controlled by the agent manager upon acceptance by the send command accepting means of a send command which designates the transmission of an E-mail, the mail sending means appending the agent parameters to the main mail text having an appended mail header, for sending an E-mail to a recipient in combination with the agent manager which modifies the agent parameters responsive to the contents of experiences reflecting the operating hysteresis for the agent for voluntarily sending to the user or recipient an E-mail of an illustrative sentence pre-set by the agent, among other features. In view of the failure of the cited references to teach or suggest all the features of claim 14, the claimed invention is believed allowable over the cited references.

Claims 15 and 16, which depend from claim 14 directly or indirectly, recite additional features and are allowable for the reason discussed above with respect to claim 14.

Davies, alone or in combination with *Brunson*, does not disclose or otherwise suggest all the features of the claimed invention set forth in claim 17. Specifically, claim 17 recites a plurality of agent parameters are appended to the main mail text having an appended mail header responsive to a send command for designating the transmission of an E-mail in combination with a control procedure performed for automatic transmission by the agent of an E-mail of a pre-set illustrative sentence based on the agent parameters to the user. In view of the failure of the cited references to teach or suggest all the features of claim 17, the claimed invention is believed allowable over the cited references.

Claims 18 and 19, which depend from claim 17 directly or indirectly, recite additional features and are allowable for the reason discussed above with respect to claim 17.

Davies, alone or in combination with *Brunson*, does not disclose or otherwise suggest all the features of the claimed invention set forth in claim 20. Specifically, claim 20 recites a plurality of agent parameters are appended to the main mail text having an appended mail header responsive to a send command for designating the transmission of an E-mail, in combination with a control procedure performed for automatic transmission by the agent of an E-mail of a pre-set illustrative sentence based on the agent parameters to the user or to a recipient, among other features. In view of the failure of the cited references to teach or suggest the features of claim 20, the claimed invention is believed allowable over the cited references.

Claim 21 depends from claim 20 and is believed allowable for the reason discussed above with respect thereto.

Davies, alone or in combination with *Brunson*, does not disclose or otherwise suggest all the features of the claimed invention set forth in claim 22. Specifically, claim 22 recites a plurality of agent parameters are appended to the main mail text having an appended mail header responsive to a send command for designating the transmission of an E-mail, in combination with the agent randomly selecting the user or a recipient based on the agent parameters for voluntarily sending an E-mail of a pre-set illustrative sentence, among other features. In view of the failure of the cited references to teach or suggest all the features of claim 22, the claimed invention is believed allowable over the cited references.

Claims 23 and 24, which depend directly or indirectly from claim 22, recite additional features and are believed allowable for all the reason discussed above.

Claims 33 through 48 are cancelled without prejudice. The 35 U.S.C. §103 rejection of those claims is therefore moot.

Davies, alone or in combination with *Brunson*, does not disclose or otherwise suggest all the features of the claimed invention set forth in claim 49. Specifically, claim 49 as amended recites the combination of displaying the virtual agent on a display unit, interacting with the virtual agent, positioning at least a portion of the display of the input device over the virtual agent on the display unit, detecting an input signal from the input device and modifying the agent parameters, among other features. In view of the failure of the cited references to teach or suggest the

features of claim 49 as amended, claim 49 is believed allowable over the cited references.

Claims 50 through 57 depend from claim 49, directly or indirectly, and recite additional features. Claims 50 through 57 are allowable for the reason discussed above with respect to claim 49.

Davies, alone or in combination with *Brunson*, does not disclose or otherwise suggest all the features of the claimed invention set forth in claim 58. Specifically, claim 58 recites appending a plurality of agent parameters to the main mail text of the E-mail in combination with automatically returning an indication when the recipient has received the E-mail, among other features. In view of the failure of the cited references to teach or suggest all the features of claim 58, claim 58 is believed allowable over the cited references.

Claims 59 through 66, which depend from claim 58, directly or indirectly, recite additional features and are allowable for all the reasons discussed above with respect to claim 58.

New independent claims 67 and 69 recite displaying the virtual agent on a display unit, interacting with the virtual agent, positioning at least a portion of the display of the input device over the virtual agent on the display unit, detecting an input signal from the input device and modifying the agent parameters, among other features. New claims 68 and 70 recite appending a plurality of agent parameters to the main mail text of the E-mail in combination with automatically returning an indication when the recipient has received the E-mail, among other features.

New independent claims 71, 112 and 119 recite storing a first image data of the first agent and second image data of a second agent among other features. New independent claims 77, 113 and 120 recite storing a first parameter in a first storage device and transferring the first parameter from the first storage device to a first memory. New independent claims 83, 114 and 121 recite a first computer sending and receiving a first agent parameter. New independent claims 93, 115 and 122 recite updating a plurality of first agent parameters based on a current first agent parameter in combination with an interaction between a first virtual agent, a second virtual agent and an operator. New independent claims 99, 116 and 123 recite randomly generating an agent parameter which is configured to determine a behavior of an agent. New independent claims 105, 117 and 124 recite storing a first agent software, executing the first agent software using an agent parameter in

combination with sending the agent parameter using an E-mail to a remote computer storing a second agent software which is substantially similar to the first agent software so that the second software can be executed using the agent parameter. New independent claims 107, 118 and 125 recite providing a virtual agent having a plurality of agent parameters, sending the agent parameters to a recipient through a network using an e-mail in combination with setting the virtual agent to an absent state.

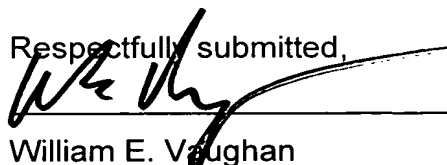
As understood, none of the cited references disclose or otherwise suggest the claimed inventions as set forth in new independent claims 67 - 71, 71, 77, 83, 93, 99, 105, 107 and 112-125 and dependent claims 72-76, 78-82, 84-92, 94-98, 100-104, 106 and 108-111 are allowable.

Applicants respectfully request that the Amendments be entered as provided above. Applicants respectfully submit that the independent claims, as well as all claims which depend therefrom, are novel and non-obvious over the prior art of record. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that all such pending claims be deemed allowable at this time.

Attached hereto is a marked up version of the changes made to the specification and claims by the current amendment. The attached page is captioned **"Version with markings to show changes made"**.

If any fees are due in connection with this application as a whole, the office is authorized to deduct said fees from Deposit Account 02-1818. If such a withdrawal is made, please indicate the Attorney Docket No. (0112857-118) on the account statement.

Respectfully submitted,



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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as First Class Mail addressed to the Assistant Commissioner for Patents, Washington, D.C. 20231 on May 2, 2001.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "W. H. Long", is written over a horizontal line.



In The Claims:

Claims 33-48 and 50 have been cancelled.

Claims 1-3, 49 and 52 have been amended as follows:

1. (Twice Amended) A method for automatic control of the transmission of an E-mail,

wherein a plurality of agent parameters controlling the behavior of an agent delivering an E-mail are appended to the main mail text having an appended mail header, the agent parameters are responsive to a send command designating the transmission of the E-mail for transmission to a recipient;

wherein the agent parameters are modified responsive to the contents of experiences reflecting the operating hysteresis for the agent; and further

wherein an E-mail of a pre-set illustrative sentence is sent by said agent to [the recipient] a user of the agent based on said agent parameters.

2. (Twice Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein a control procedure is performed so that an illustrative sentence of an E-mail for transmission is randomly selected from a plurality of illustrative sentences classed and pre-set depending on the contents of experiences acquired by said agent so that the selected sentence [are] is in a class consistent with the contents of experiences acquired by said agent, the selected sentence being voluntarily sent to the [recipient] user of the agent.

3. (Twice Amended) The method of claim 2 wherein an effective period of said agent is set and an E-mail is voluntarily sent to the [recipient] user of said agent upon expiration of said effective period.

49. (Amended) A method of controlling a virtual agent, comprising the steps of:

generating a virtual agent adapted to deliver E-mails and having a plurality of agent parameters, said agent parameters configured to determine [the] a behavior of said virtual agent;

displaying said virtual agent on a display unit;

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interacting with said virtual agent on said display unit, including positioning at least a portion of a display of an input device over said virtual agent on said display unit, detecting an input signal from said input device, and modifying the agent parameters such that said displaying step displays said virtual agent in response to said input signal; and

updating said plurality of agent parameters based on said interacting step such that the behavior of said virtual agent is continuously modified.

52. (Amended) The method of claim [50] 49 wherein said input signal includes one of petting said virtual agent and hitting said virtual agent.

Claims 67 – 125 have been added as follows:

67. (New) An apparatus for controlling a virtual agent, said apparatus comprising:

means for generating a virtual agent adapted to deliver E-mail and having a plurality of agent parameters, said agent parameters configured to determine a behavior of said virtual agent;

a display unit adapted to display said virtual agent;

means for interacting with said virtual agent on said display unit, said interacting means including means for positioning at least a portion of a display of an input device over said virtual agent on said display unit, means for detecting an input signal from said input device, and means for modifying the agent parameters such that said display unit displays said virtual agent in response to said input signal; and

means for updating said plurality of agent parameters using said interacting means such that the behavior of said virtual agent is continuously modified.

68. (New) An apparatus for automatic control of an E-mail transmission, said apparatus comprising:

means for receiving a send command designating the transmission of an E-mail to a recipient;

means for appending a plurality of agent parameters to a main mail text of said E-mail, said agent parameters controlling the behavior of an agent delivering said E-mail;

means for transmitting said E-mail to said recipient;

means for automatically returning an indication when said recipient has received said E-mail; and

means for modifying said agent parameters based on said agent interacting with said recipient.

69. (New) A computer readable medium for controlling a virtual agent, wherein said medium generates a virtual agent adapted to deliver E-mail and having a plurality of agent parameters, said agent parameters are configured to determine a behavior of said virtual agent;

wherein said virtual agent is displayed on a display unit;

wherein said virtual agent interacts on said display unit including positioning at least a portion of a display of an input device over said virtual agent on said display unit, detecting an input signal from said input device, and modifying the agent parameters such that said display unit displays said agent in response to said input signal; and

wherein said plurality of agent parameters are updated based on said interaction such that the behavior of said virtual agent is continuously modified.

70. (New) A computer readable medium for automatic control of the transmission of an E-mail wherein said medium, on receiving a send command designating the transmission of an E-mail to a recipient, appends a plurality of agent parameters to a main mail text of said E-mail, said agent parameters controlling the behavior of an agent delivering said E-mail;

wherein said E-mail is transmitted to said recipient;

wherein an indicator that said recipient has received said E-mail is automatically returned; and

wherein said agent parameters are modified based on said agent interacting with said recipient.

71. (New) A method for providing a virtual agent, said method comprising the steps of:

storing a first agent parameter controlling a first agent kept by a first person on a first computer operated by said first person;

storing a first image data of said first agent on said first computer;

storing a second image data of a second agent being kept by a second person on said first computer;

displaying said first agent on a first screen connected to said first computer based on said first image data and said first agent parameter; and

sending said first agent parameter to said first computer through a communication network using E-mail.

72. (New) The method according to claim 71 wherein said first agent is displayed as an animated character.

73. (New) The method according to claim 71 further including receiving a second agent parameter controlling a second agent kept by said second person through the communication network using E-mail and displaying said second agent on said first screen connected to said first computer based on said second image data and said second agent parameter.

74. (New) The method according to claim 71 further including detecting a first event corresponding to said first agent and updating said first agent parameter with said detected first event.

75. (New) The method according to claim 73 further including detecting a second event corresponding to said second agent and updating said second agent parameter with said detected second event.

76. (New) A method according to claim 71 further including randomly generating said first agent parameter.

77. (New) A method of providing a virtual agent, said method comprising the steps of:

storing a first agent parameter in a first storage device, said first agent parameter controlling a first virtual agent adapted to deliver E-mail kept by a first person;

transferring said first agent parameter from said first storage device to a first memory device for controlling said first agent at a first computer operated by said first person; and

sending said first agent parameter from said first memory device to a second computer remote from both said first storage device and said first computer through a communication network.

78. (New) The method according to claim 77 wherein said first agent parameter is sent from said first memory device to a remote computer without passing through said first storage device.

79. (New) The method according claim 77 wherein said first agent parameter is sent from said first memory device to a remote computer through an Internet service provider.

80. (New) The method according to claim 77 wherein said first storage device is a hard disk drive.

81. (New) The method according to claim 77 wherein said first memory device is random access memory.

82. (New) The method according to claim 77 further including randomly generating said first agent parameter.

83. (New) A method of providing a virtual agent, said method comprising the steps of:

sending a first agent parameter at a first computer operated by a first person to a second computer remote from said first computer using E-mail through a communication network, wherein said second computer is operated by a second person and said first agent parameter controls a first agent kept by said first person;

receiving said first agent parameter sent from said second computer at said first computer;

receiving a second agent parameter sent from said second computer at said first computer, said second agent parameter controlling a second virtual agent kept by said second person; and

sending said received second agent parameter to said second computer using said first computer.

84. (New) The method according to claim 83 further including processing said first agent parameter to execute said first agent at said first computer.

85. (New) The method according to claim 83 further including processing said second agent parameter to execute said second agent at said first computer.

86. (New) The method according to claim 83 further including detecting a first event corresponding to said first agent and updating said first agent parameter with said detected event.

87. (New) The method according to claim 83 further including detecting a second event corresponding to said second agent and updating said second agent parameter with said detected event.

88. (New) The method according to claim 86 wherein said first event is a first interaction between said first agent and said second agent.

89. (New) The method according to claim 86 wherein said first event is a second interaction between said first agent and an operation by said first person.

90. (New) The method according to 87 wherein said second event is a third interaction between said second agent and said first agent.

91. (New) The method according to 87 wherein said second event is a fourth interaction between said second agent and an operation by said first person.

92. (New) The method according to claim 83 further including randomly generating said first agent parameter.

93. (New) A method of providing a virtual agent, said method comprising the steps of:

detecting one or more events corresponding to a first virtual agent adapted to deliver E-mail, wherein the behavior of said first virtual agent is determined by a plurality of first agent parameters;

updating said plurality of first agent parameters based on a current first agent parameter with each detected event such that the behavior of said first virtual agent is continuously modified with each detected event; and

wherein said events include an interaction between said first virtual agent and a second virtual agent controlled by a second agent parameter and an interaction between said first virtual agent and an operation by an operator.

94. (New) The method according to claim 93 further including receiving said second agent parameter through a communication network.

95. (New) The method according to claim 93 further including updating said second agent parameter.

96. (New) The method according to claim 95 further including sending said updated second agent parameter through a communication network.

97. (New) The method according to claim 93 further including sending said first agent parameters through a communication network.

98. (New) The method according to claim 93 further including randomly generating said first agent parameters.

99. (New) A method of providing an agent, said method comprising the steps of:

randomly generating an agent parameter which is configured to determine a behavior of an agent adapted to deliver E-mail; and

storing said agent in a memory device.

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100. (New) The method according to claim 99 further including sending said agent parameter through a communication network using an E-mail.

101. (New) The method according to claim 99 further including updating said agent parameter according to an event.

102. (New) The method according to claim 100 further including receiving said sent agent parameter.

103. (New) The method according to claim 99 further including displaying said agent on a display unit.

104. (New) The method according to claim 103 wherein said agent is displayed as an animated character.

105. (New) A method of providing an agent, said method comprising the steps of:

- storing a first agent software;
- storing an agent parameter controlling a behavior of an agent;
- executing said first agent software using said agent parameter to control the behavior of the agent; and

- sending said agent parameter using E-mail to a remote computer storing a second agent software which is substantially the same as said first agent software so that said second agent software can be executed using said agent parameter to control the behavior of the agent.

106. (New) The method according to claim 105 further including receiving said agent parameter from said remote computer.

107. (New) A method of controlling a virtual agent, said method comprising the steps of:

- providing a virtual agent having a plurality of agent parameters, said agent parameters configured to determine the behavior of said virtual agent;
- sending said agent parameters to a recipient through a network using E-mail;

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setting a state of said virtual agent to an absent state corresponding to said sending step; and

selectively displaying said virtual agent on the display unit according to said state wherein said virtual agent is displayed on a display unit when said state represents other than said absent state.

108. (New) The method of claim 107 further including receiving said agent parameters through the network, setting the state of said virtual agent to an existing state corresponding to said receiving step, and selectively displaying said virtual pet on the display unit according to said state wherein said virtual pet is displayed on a display unit when said state represents said existing state.

109. (New) The method of claim 108 wherein said received agent parameters have been modified.

110. (New) The method of claim 109 wherein said received agent parameters have been continuously modified.

111. (New) The method of claim 107 wherein said agent parameters include sending date and time information, and setting the state of said virtual agent to an existing state after a lapse of pre-set time based on the sending date and time information.

112. (New) An apparatus for providing a virtual agent, said apparatus comprising:

means for storing a first agent parameter controlling a first agent kept by a first person on a first computer kept by said first person;

means for storing a first image data of said first agent on said first computer;

means for storing a second image data of a second agent kept by second person on said first computer;

a display unit connected to said first computer adapted to display said first agent on a first screen based on said first image data and said first agent parameter; and

means for sending said first agent parameter to said first computer through a communication network using E-mail.

113. (New) An apparatus for providing a virtual agent, said apparatus comprising:

means for storing a first agent parameter in a first storage device, said first agent parameter controlling a first virtual agent kept by a first person;

means for transferring said first agent parameter from said first storage device to a first memory for controlling said first agent at a first computer operated by said first person; and

means for sending said first agent parameter from said first memory to a second computer remote from both said first storage device and said first computer through a communication network using E-mail.

114. (New) An apparatus for providing a virtual agent, said apparatus comprising:

means for sending a first agent parameter at a first computer operated by a first person to a second computer remote from said first computer through a communication network using E-mail, wherein said second computer is operated by a second person and said first agent parameter controls a first agent kept by said first person;

means for receiving said first agent parameter sent from said second computer using said first computer;

means for receiving a second agent parameter sent from second computer at said first computer, said second agent parameter controlling a second virtual agent kept by said second person; and

means for sending a received said second agent parameter to said second computer using said first computer.

115. (New) An apparatus for providing a virtual agent, said apparatus comprising:

means for detecting one or more events corresponding to a first virtual agent adapted to deliver an E-mail, wherein the behavior of said first virtual agent is determined by a plurality of first agent parameters;

means for updating said plurality of first agent parameters based on a current first agent parameter with each detected event such that the behavior of said first virtual agent is continuously modified with each detected event; and

means for interacting said first virtual agent with a second virtual agent controlled by a second agent parameter and said first virtual agent with an operation by an operator.

116. (New) An apparatus for providing an agent, said apparatus comprising:
means for randomly generating an agent parameter which is configured to determine a behavior of an agent and adapted to deliver E-mail; and
means for storing said agent in a memory device.

117. (New) An apparatus for providing an agent, said apparatus comprising:
means for storing a first agent software;
means for storing an agent parameter controlling a behavior of an agent;
means for executing said first agent software using said agent parameter to control the behavior of said agent; and
means for sending said agent parameter using E-mail to a remote computer storing a second agent software which is substantially the same as said first agent software so that said second software can be executed using said agent parameter to control the behavior of the agent.

118. (New) An apparatus for controlling a virtual agent, said apparatus comprising:
means for providing a virtual agent having a plurality of agent parameters, said agent parameters configured to determine the behavior of said virtual agent;
means for sending said agent parameters to a recipient through a network using E-mail;
means for setting a state of said virtual agent to an absent state corresponding to said sending means sending said agent parameters; and
means for selectively displaying said virtual agent on the display unit according to said state connected to a display unit wherein said virtual agent is displayed when said state is other than said absent state.

119. (New) A computer readable medium for providing a virtual agent, wherein said medium stores a first agent parameter controlling a first agent kept by a first person a first computer operated by said first person; stores a first image data of said first agent on said first computer; stores a second image data of a second agent being kept by second person on said first computer; displays said first agent on a first screen connected to said first computer based on said first image data and said first agent parameter; and wherein said first agent parameter is sent to said first computer through a communication network using E-mail.

120. (New) A computer readable medium for of providing a virtual agent wherein a first agent parameter is stored in a first storage device, said first agent parameter controlling a first virtual agent kept by a first person;

wherein said first agent parameter is transferred from said first storage device to a first memory for controlling said first agent at a first computer operated by said first person; and

wherein said first agent parameter is sent from said first memory to a second computer remote from both said first storage and said first computer through a communication network using an E-mail.

121. (New) A computer readable medium for providing a virtual agent wherein a first agent parameter at first computer operated by a first person is sent to a second computer remote from said first computer through a communication network using E-mail, wherein said second computer is operated by a second person and said first agent parameter controls a first agent kept by said first person;

wherein said first agent parameter sent from said second computer is received using said first computer;

wherein a second agent parameter sent from second computer is received using said first computer, said second agent parameter controlling a second virtual agent kept by said second person; and

wherein a received said second agent parameter is sent to said second computer using said first computer.

122. (New) A computer readable medium for providing a virtual agent using an E-mail wherein said medium detects one or more events corresponding to a first

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virtual agent and the behavior of said first virtual agent is determined by a plurality of first agent parameters;

said plurality of first agent parameters are updated based on a current first agent parameter with each detected event such that the behavior of said first virtual agent is continuously modified with each detected event; and

wherein said events include an interaction between said first virtual agent and a second virtual agent controlled by a second agent parameter and an interaction between said first virtual agent and an operation by an operator.

123. (New) A computer readable medium for providing an agent wherein an agent parameter which is configured to determine a behavior of agent adapted to deliver E-mail is randomly generated; and wherein said agent is stored in a memory device.

124. (New) A computer readable medium for providing an agent wherein the medium stores a first agent software;

wherein an agent parameter controlling a behavior of an agent is stored;

wherein said first agent software is executed using said agent parameter to control the behavior of the agent; and

wherein said agent parameter is sent using E-mail to a remote computer storing a second agent software which is substantially the same as said first agent software so that said second software can be executed using said agent parameter to control the behavior of the agent.

125. (New) A computer readable medium for controlling a virtual agent wherein said medium provides a virtual agent having a plurality of agent parameters, said agent parameters configured to determine the behavior of said virtual agent;

wherein said agent parameters are sent to a recipient through a network using E-mail;

wherein a state of said virtual agent is set to an absent state corresponding to sending said agent parameters to said recipient; and

wherein said virtual agent is selectively displayed on the display unit according to said state, wherein said virtual agent is displayed on a display unit when said state represents other than said absent state.